

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

Subject

Legislative Policy: Problems of Homeless Persons

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Purpose

To establish the Board of Supervisors' legislative policy regarding issues related to homeless persons, and to provide guidance to the County's legislative representatives when advocating the County's interests to legislators, other elected officials and policy makers.

Background

The Regional Task Force on the Homeless estimates that for 2006 there were 8,000 homeless individuals throughout San Diego County. Furthermore, estimates indicate that in the San Diego Region there were approximately 6,400 urban homeless people and approximately 1,600 homeless farm workers/day laborers.

The Regional Task Force on the Homeless addresses the issue of homelessness on a region-wide basis through statistical research, close contact with providers and funding agencies, advocacy, and technical and information services to those serving the homeless. The Task Force is committed to a coordinated countywide approach to homelessness and provides all service organizations in the region with information and statistics on the homeless population and homeless facilities and services.

The County of San Diego performs four distinct roles in the delivery of services to the homeless, including:

- Regional — The County administers or delivers health and social services to the homeless in all incorporated cities as well as the unincorporated areas of the county. Funds for these services come primarily from the federal and state governments, although County general funds are also contributed.
- Municipal — Cities are primarily responsible for providing housing opportunities for their residents, including those who are homeless. The County also has a responsibility for providing adequate housing opportunities for its residents, however, that housing responsibility is limited to the unincorporated areas of the county.
- Urban County — The County receives funds that can be used for services to homeless persons in the unincorporated areas and the cities comprising the urban county.
- Grant Applicant — The County works collaboratively with the non-profit community and participating cities in the completion of competitive grants from

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the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and state and federal agencies for funds that would assist homeless people.

Policy

The legislative policy of the Board of Supervisors regarding issues related to homeless persons is to:

1. Support legislation that would recognize and provide funding to address homelessness as a symptom of other underlying health and social problems, including mental illness, unemployment, alcohol and drug dependency, breakup of traditional families, and lack of affordable housing.
2. Support legislation that would allocate resources, to the extent possible, to existing governmental and private service delivery systems to augment services that address the underlying causes of homelessness.
3. Support legislation that would provide incentives for increased levels of volunteerism and involvement by private business and non-profit corporations.
4. Support legislation that would seek to maximize federal and state resources that might be applied to the problem of homelessness in California and San Diego County.
5. Support legislation that would provide counties with flexibility to allocate resources for combating homelessness to best meet local needs, recognizing that the combination of problems resulting in homelessness can vary from community to community.
6. Support legislation that would deal with the problem of homelessness using a continuum of care approach that would support self-sufficiency and transitional programs.
7. Support legislation that would provide funding for shelters serving domestic violence victims.
8. Oppose legislation that would impose new, unfunded mandates on counties to address the problems of homelessness.
9. Oppose legislation that would specifically target new resources to geographical areas of the State that already receive a disproportionate share of existing resources allocated to address problems associated with homelessness.
10. Oppose legislation that would specifically target resources to particular population groups without requiring, as a prerequisite, empirical justification for such allocation preferences.
11. Support legislation that would maximize the impact of current resources available for local homeless programs; and permit counties to determine, based on community circumstances, how resources should be allocated.

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12. Support legislation that would provide funding for shelters serving the general homeless population.
13. Support legislation to provide funding for more homeless shelter beds.
14. Support legislation to create shelter beds for homeless patients recuperating after their hospital stay.
15. Support legislation that does not hold physicians or hospitals liable for where a discharged patient winds up once they leave the hospital, absent their gross negligence.
16. Support legislation that would expand and provide additional funding for programs such as homeless outreach teams.

Responsible Departments

Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Housing and Community Development
Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-14.

References

Board Action 2/19/85 (68-71)
Board Action 5/22/85 (3)
Board Action 1/29/91 (78)
Board Action 4/13/99 (42A)
Board Action 1/13/04 (13)
Board Action 12/11/07 (14)